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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION  
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#### HEADLINES

##### MASS APPEAL

The Guardian: US masses troops in northern Iraq - Hurriyet  
Damascus is prime suspect in Hariri assassination - Hurriyet  
US recalls ambassador from Damascus - Sabah  
Washington toughens against Damascus - Milliyet  
Fear reigns in Middle East - Aksam  
Al-Qaeda holds Syria, Israel responsible for Hariri killing  
- Aksam  
Allawi: New Iraqi government will be 'Islamic' - Milliyet  
Moderate Islamist Caferi to take Iraq prime minister post -  
Hurriyet

##### OPINION MAKERS

Eyes turned to Syria-Israel-US after Hariri assassination -  
Zaman  
US, UN send tough message to Syria - Cumhuriyet  
Civil war fears in Lebanon - Cumhuriyet  
Hariri wanted Syria out of Lebanon - Radikal  
Israel sows seeds of anarchy in Lebanon - Yeni Safak  
US builds up troops in northern Iraq against Turkish  
intervention - Yeni Safak  
PM Erdogan given warm welcome in Tirana - Yeni Safak  
Kyoto Protocol takes effect - Cumhuriyet  
Bush urgently requests \$81.9 billion - Radikal  
Cheney's daughter to run 'GME' project - Radikal  
Israeli troops kill Palestinian child, ceasefire in jeopardy  
- Zaman  
US second missile shield test fails - Zaman  
Woman governor in Afghanistan - Radikal  
Tsunami victims to sue US -Yeni Safak

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#### BRIEFING

US Masses Troops in Northern Iraq: All Turkish papers cite  
a story from "The Guardian" claiming that the US has massed  
troops in northern Iraq in an effort to block a possible  
Turkish military intervention. Domestic pressure is  
increasing on PM Erdogan to intervene in Kirkuk, the article  
claims. An unidentified Turkish diplomat said Kirkuk is a  
potential 'powder keg,' a city like Jerusalem for the Turks.  
'Kirkuk belongs to all Iraqis. We wouldn't like to see our  
'red lines' -- Kirkuk and attacks on ethnic minorities --  
violated,' the diplomat said. US reluctance to remove some  
4,000 PKK militants from northern Iraq may be another factor  
that could force Ankara to take action, "The Guardian"  
notes. The story also claims that US Secretary of State  
Condoleezza Rice tried to assuage Turkish concerns during  
her recent visit to Ankara.

Assassination of Refik Hariri: All Turkish papers give  
extensive coverage to the assassination of former Lebanese  
PM Refik Hariri and the international reaction to the  
killing. Turkey's FM Abdullah Gul portrayed Hariri as a  
figure who had worked for peace, security and development in  
Lebanon. His friends in Turkey are 'deeply saddened' by the  
killing of Hariri, Gul said, and voiced hope that the  
assassination will not open the way toward more terrorism in  
Lebanon.

Erdogan Blames Turkmen for Low Turnout in Elections: PM  
Erdogan said at a party meeting on Monday that Turkey would  
'update' its Iraq policy according to the latest  
developments in that country, "Hurriyet" reports. 'Our  
Iraqi Turkmen brothers did not show enough interest in the  
Iraqi election - they were either disorganized, or under  
pressure,' Erdogan reportedly said. Erdogan blamed the  
Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) for failing to get its people to  
the ballot box.  
PM Erdogan Visits Albania: PM Tayyip Erdogan met his  
Albanian counterpart, Fatos Nano, on Tuesday. The two sides

agreed on the need to increase military and economic cooperation, and to open a Turkish university in Tirana, papers report. Erdogan said after the talks that Turkey would support Albania's membership in NATO.

Council of Europe Report on Religious Education: The AK Party government is angry with a Council of Europe report calling for an end to compulsory religious education in Turkish state schools, papers report. Parliamentary speaker Bulent Arinc said that the category of religion can be removed from identity cards, an issue raised in the report, but said the Council's report showed that the Europeans 'don't understand Turkey.' PM Erdogan said the report could be discussed in parliament if necessary. State minister for Religious Affairs (Diyanet) Mehmet Aydin said that since 99 percent of Turks are Muslims, they have the right to teach Islam to their children in schools.

Important Mission for VP Cheney's Daughter: US envoy to NATO, Nicholas Burns, is to replace Marc Grossman as the State Department undersecretary for political affairs, and Dick Cheney's daughter Elizabeth has been assigned to supervise the US Broader Middle East and North Africa project, Turkish papers report.

Minister Mumcu Resigns From Government, Party: Tourism and Culture Minister Erkan Mumcu resigned from his government post and from the ruling AK Party due to what he describes as 'strong disagreements' within the Council of Ministers. Mumcu has criticized the government for pursuing populist policies, particularly over the issue of an amnesty being considered for university students. The current distribution of seats in the Turkish parliament following the Mumcu defection is as follows: AKP 366, CHP 171, DYP 5, Independent 7, Vacant 1.

Abducted Turkish Businessman Released in Iraq: Turkish shipping magnate Kahraman Sadikoglu, who was abducted in Iraq two months ago, was released yesterday and returned to Turkey. Sadikoglu said his kidnappers were part of former Iraqi leader Saddam's 'mujahedeen.' Sadikoglu, President of International Marine Contractors, reportedly paid \$500,000 in ransom to his kidnapers.

One Killed, Several Detained in Rallies for Ocalan: On Tuesday, a protestor demonstrating for the release of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was killed in Turkey's Mediterranean province of Mersin. Several other rallies were held in Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, Hatay, Diyarbakir, and Van yesterday to protest the sixth anniversary of Ocalan's capture in Kenya.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: Hariri; Iraq

"Who to Blame in Lebanon?"

Zafer Atay commented in the economic-politic "Dunya" (2/16): "The Hariri incident seems to be an assassination with some complexities involved. Syrian leader Asad harshly denounced the assassination, yet it does not change the fact that all fingers are pointing at Damascus. And that remains a strong possibility. . There are various speculations in the aftermath of the Hariri assassination. Some Western countries, including the US, are accusing Syria of manipulating the terrorists close to Damascus. The majority of Beirut commentators believe that this incident will serve as an excuse for Syria to remain in Lebanon because of the elections coming in two months. Nothing is certain about this incident, and the organization which claimed responsibility for the assassination is another uncertainty, because no one knows anything about it. . In any case, time will show who is really responsible; an event of such magnitude cannot be left in the dark."

"A Hell in Beirut"

Yilmaz Oztuna observed in the conservative-mass appeal "Turkiye" (2/16): "The assassination of Hariri has turned Beirut into a hell. During the Ottoman Empire's rule, Lebanon was a prosperous, paradise-like country. Today, Israel has withdrawn from the south of Lebanon, but Syria has continued to bother Lebanon. Hariri was anti-Syria. It is a possibility that the assassination was planned by Syrian intelligence; if not, it was definitely planned by some intelligence organization. Al-Qaida stressed that no Islamic organization is behind the assassination. It is rather surprising that Hariri's relationship with Saudi Arabia has been asserted as the reason for his assassination. As a matter of fact, everything is surprising in the Middle East. But one can never find a positive surprise there. It is difficult to guess what the follow-up of the assassination will be. However, it is obvious that a new wave of chaos will occur before the last one disappears."

"Can Iraq Be a New Iran?"

Sami Kohen opined in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (2/16):

"There is an ongoing worry both in the Western world as well as in some Islamic countries about the possibility of Iraq's election-winner Shiite groups turning the country into an Iranian-like regime. Since Iraqi Shiites and other Iraqi ethnic groups come from a different cultural and historical background, it is unlikely to see an Iraqi regime under Iran's total influence. . As for Sistani being the winner, he was born in Iran but he never followed a Khomeini-style policy. . On the other hand, religion will certainly play an important role in shaping the Iraqi rebuilding process, including the writing of a new constitution. The religion debate will focus on finding a formula all groups can agree on. . In this regard it will be important to see what kind of Islamic rules will prevail in the daily lives of Iraqis on such issues as women's rights, education, dress codes, use of alcohol and other things."

EDELMAN